



BIPARTISAN FAA BILL CREATES JOBS, PROTECTS AMERICAN WORKERS AND IMPROVES SERVICE AND SAFETY FOR PASSENGERS

Since the last long-term FAA authorization bill expired in 2007, the FAA has run under 23 short-term authorizations, the latest of which is set to expire on February 17, 2012. In January 2012, House and Senate negotiators announced a compromise on a four-year reauthorization bill that creates thousands of jobs, protects American airline workers and improves service and safety for travelers.

Long-Term FAA Bill Makes Investments That Will Create or Protect More Than 300,000 Jobs. The final FAA bill includes \$3.35 billion annually through Fiscal Year 2015. Since every \$1 billion in federal spending supports nearly 35,000 jobs, this means the final FAA bill will create or protect more than 300,000 jobs. [AP, [1/31/11](#)]

Long-Term Bill Will Provide Stability And Give FAA The Tools to Modernize. The final FAA compromise “is expected to result in more-stable FAA budgets and stronger policy direction for the agency. In particular, it's likely to provide momentum for upgrading the nation's air-traffic control system, according to industry and union officials. The lack of clear-cut marching orders or long-term budget guidelines from Congress has been among the reasons the FAA has had difficulty persuading U.S. airlines to invest heavily in equipment necessary to make the shift from aging ground-based, traffic-control systems to satellite-based networks that would save fuel and allow pilots greater flexibility in choosing routes.” The final bill gives the FAA the long-term stability it needs to implement NextGen navigation technology. [Wall Street Journal, [1/24/12](#)]

Long-Term FAA Bill Includes \$190 Million For Essential Air Service in Rural Communities. The Essential Air Service, and the access it provides to the national air transportation system, is critical to the economic viability of small and rural communities. The final bill supports and strengthens EAS by ensuring appropriate funding for the program and implementing targeted reforms to make the program more efficient and effective, including:

- Caps program eligibility to those communities that currently receive EAS subsidies.
- Eliminates eligibility for under-utilized communities that: average fewer than 10 enplanements per day and are within 175 miles of a large or medium hub airport; or have a per passenger subsidy that exceeds \$1,000.

It also permits FAA to take a number of actions to with EAS carriers and communities to encourage better service. The original House-passed bill would have essentially phased out the EAS program, cutting off access to more than 100 rural communities. [FAA Conference Report; CRS, [9/29/11](#)]

Long-Term FAA Bill Includes Compromise That Will Authorize Additional Flights From the West Coast to Washington D.C. The final FAA bill authorizes eight additional round trip flights, for a total 16 slots, beyond the 1,250 mile perimeter limit at Reagan Washington National Airport. [CQ, 1/31/12]

Democrats Rejected GOP Attempts to Limit Workers' Rights. The main sticking point in the long-term FAA reauthorization had been a proposal by the Obama Administration to protect the rights of rail and aviation workers. Specifically, the National Mediation Board under President Obama ruled in May 2010 that aviation and rail workers who do not vote in unionization votes should no longer be counted as a vote against joining the union. Republicans fought tirelessly to rescind the National Mediation Board rule, while Democrats refused to allow such a move. The final compromise bill protects the NMB rule and thousands of American workers. In addition, Democrats rejected Republican efforts to expand judicial review to NMD determinations and rejected Republican attempts to codify certification and decertification procedures. [National Journal, [1/20/12](#); FAA Conference Report]

Compromise Will Avoid Another Devastating FAA Shutdown. In 2011, Republicans' refusal to compromise led to a partial FAA shutdown. During the shutdown, approximately 74,000 American workers were out of work, while the government lost at least \$468 million in critical tax revenues. [AFP, [1/21/12](#); Bloomberg, [1/21/12](#)]